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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration

December 28, 2004

Robert Fitzgerald, MD
President
Medina County Environmental Action Association
202 CR 450
Hondo, TX 78861

Re: STB Finance Docket 34284, Southwest Gulf Railroad Company – Construction
and Operation Exemption – Medina County, TX

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

Thank you for your three recent letters on behalf of the Medina County Environmental Action Association (MCEAA) regarding the Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis' (SEA) environmental review of Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's (SGR) proposed rail line construction and operation in Medina County, Texas. I have addressed each letter below.

December 8, 2004 Letter Requesting Answers to Questions in Four Issue Areas

MCEAA requests that SEA provide information on when a decision concerning reconsideration of the scope of analysis of the quarry will be made, when MCEAA will be notified of this decision, information on who will make this decision, and why the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is, according to MCEAA, inadequate. MCEAA also requests a copy of the sign-in list of attendees for the public meetings held on December 2, 2004, and a list of those persons speaking at the meetings.

Response: The questions raised in MCEAA's letter are substantive comments on the scope and contents of the Draft EIS. As stated in the Draft EIS, after the close of the public comment period on the Draft EIS, a Final EIS will be prepared in response to comments on the Draft EIS. The Final EIS is the appropriate forum for responding to the comments received on the Draft EIS. SEA will ensure that copies of the Final EIS are available to all who submitted comments on the Draft EIS.

SEA has enclosed a copy of the sign-in list of attendees for the public meetings. The comment forms submitted by speakers at the public meetings will be made available on the

Board's website in the near future. Official transcripts of the meetings will also be posted on the Board's website when available.

December 8, 2004 Letter Requesting Extension of the Comment Period on the Draft EIS

MCEAA requests a 60 or 90 day extension of the comment period on the Draft EIS to accommodate the holiday schedules of commenters.

Response: The comment period for Draft EISs is generally 45 days. In order to accommodate MCEAA's previous request for a 60-day comment period and to take into consideration the holidays that fall within the comment period, SEA has provided a 60-day comment period on the Draft EIS. Comments are due January 10th, which should provide adequate time after the holidays for commenters to finalize their submissions. SEA does not believe an extension of the comment period is necessary at this time and comments will continue to be due on January 10, 2005. SEA reminds MCEAA that the January 10th deadline is a postmark deadline and that comments may also be submitted electronically on the Board's website by clicking on the "E-FILING" link.

December 10, 2004 Letter Regarding Rail Study of San Antonio Area Railroads

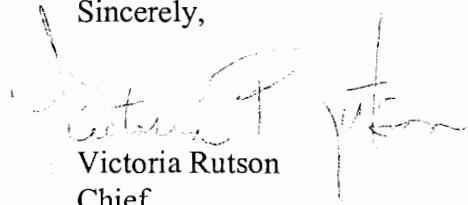
MCEAA submitted an article describing an upcoming study of rail safety in the San Antonio area and has requested SEA to respond as to whether the Board or any other Federal agency will be involved in this study.

Response: The pending study on rail safety in San Antonio may involve the Federal Railroad Administration, which is the Federal agency that administers rail safety regulations. The Board, which has jurisdiction over economic regulation of freight rail, typically does not oversee day-to-day railroad operations and therefore, does not appear to have a role in the pending study.

We appreciate your interest in the environmental review process for this proceeding. As Rini Ghosh of my staff informed Mrs. Alyne Fitzgerald at the public meetings on December 2nd, we welcome the submission of all information from MCEAA that MCEAA believes would be pertinent to the environmental review process for this proceeding.

If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Rini Ghosh of my staff at (202) 565-1539.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Victoria Rutson

Chief

Section of Environmental Analysis

cc: Senator John Cornyn
Representative Henry Bonilla
State Senator Frank Madla
State Representative Tracy King

Enclosures